

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

On behalf of the Association of Extension Administrators, it is a pleasure to provide stakeholder comments to USDA/CSREES regarding the establishment of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). We are pleased that Congress has developed language in Title VII of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 to develop NIFA as a way to raise the stature of research, extension and education at the federal level.

As the rules and regulations are developed to establish the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, CSREES is encouraged to develop rules that will ensure that the intent of Congress is met and do not negatively impact the 1890 land-grant universities. To that end, the 1890 Extension Administrators offer the following recommendations:

1. An office should be established in NIFA to provide leadership and support for the 1890 programs. This office will ensure that the 1890 universities will have a staff to manage the 1890 programs and to serve as a resource to address challenges and issues relating to the 1890 land-grant universities.
2. The persons selected to provide leadership for this office should become the spokesperson for the 1890 programs located in NIFA. Moreover, the person responsible for this office should be at the Senior Executive Service level.
3. The NIFA director should ensure that the provisions of the Food, Conservation, and Energy ACT of 2008 that relate to the 1890 land-grant universities are implemented according to the intent of Congress, specifically those provisions that provide new eligibility opportunities for the 1890 universities.
4. Regulations developed to establish NIFA should not decrease the federal support and capacity of the 1890 universities to serve the limited-resource and underserved clientele.

It is strongly believed that the recommendations listed above will ensure that the 1890 universities in general and Extension in particular remains a valuable partner with USDA to serve the needs of a diverse clientele.

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